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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; June 9, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo, JoongAng Ilbo, All TVs
[1](#)N. Korea Sentences Two U.S. Journalists to 12 Years

Dong-a Ilbo
Heavy Sentence Handed to U.S. Journalists; Does N. Korea
Aim to "Raise the Stakes" Ahead of Negotiations
for the Journalists' Release?

Hankook Ilbo
Survey: 29 Percent of Respondents Urge Lee Myung-bak Administration
to Change Its One-Sided Approach to State Administration; 22 Percent
Call for Ruling GNP
to Seek Reconciliation among Party Factions

Hankyoreh Shinmun
Will Seoul Plaza Again be "Cordoned off" by Police Buses?
Police Ban Rally to Celebrate Democracy Movement

Segye Ilbo
22 Trillion Won Set Aside to Restore Four Major Rivers

Seoul Shinmun
Old Diesel Vehicles that Emit Smoketo be Banned in Seoul
Metropolitan Area Next Year

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

According to a June 6-7 telephone survey of 1,000 ROK adults
conducted by Hankook Ilbo to mark the newspaper's 55th anniversary,
only 30.3 percent of those surveyed approved of President Lee's
management of state affairs. Furthermore, 48.5 percent wanted to
maintain the current relationship with the U.S., with 19.1 percent
calling for stronger ties with the U.S., a sharp increase from the
6.3 percent recorded in a 2002 survey. (Hankook)

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

According to North Korea's state-run Korean Central News Agency, the North's Central Court (the highest court) yesterday sentenced the two U.S. journalists, who had been held in the North since March 17, to 12 years of hard labor for committing hostile acts against the North Korean people and illegally crossing the border. (All)

Deputy White House Spokesman Bill Burton issued a statement yesterday: "The President is deeply concerned by the reported sentencing of the two American citizen journalists... and we are engaged through all possible channels to secure their release." (All)

According to U.S. network ABC, prior to the sentence, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton sent a letter to the North apologizing on behalf of the two journalists for their border crossing and appealing for their safe return home. (All)

According to a military source, North Korea has banned ships from the waters off a major portion of its east coast from June 9-29, a sign that the North may test short-range missiles during this period. (Chosun, Dong-a, Hankook, Hankyoreh, Segye, Seoul, all TVs)

According to an ROKG source, U.S. and ROK intelligence authorities secured circumstantial evidence of North Korea circulating counterfeit \$100 bills, known as "supernotes" for their high quality, in Northeast Asia. (JoongAng)

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MEDIA ANALYSIS

-U.S. Journalists Sentenced in North Korea

North Korea's sentencing yesterday of the two U.S. journalists, who had been held in the North since March 17, to 12 years of hard labor received wide press coverage.

All ROK media noted that the ruling by the North's highest court is final and is not subject to appeal, and predicted that earnest negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea would take place for the journalists' release.

Deputy White House Spokesman Bill Burton was widely quoted: "The President is deeply concerned by the reported sentencing of the two American citizen journalists... and we are engaged through all possible channels to secure their release."

The ROK media also gave wide attention to a June 7 ABC report that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, prior to the sentence, sent a letter to the North apologizing on behalf of the two journalists for their border crossing and appealing for their safe return home.

Conservative Chosun Ilbo quoted an ROKG official: "The U.S. is trying to approach the issue from a humanitarian point of view, but North Korea will highly likely attempt to link the matter with security talks, including the nuclear issue." Chosun also quoted a local analyst: "North Korea will likely demand not lip service, such as an apology from the U.S., but concrete action including easing of financial sanctions."

Conservative Dong-a Ilbo also quoted an ROKG official: "The sentence is heavy, but is nothing much to be concerned about. The journalists were not found guilty of espionage. This signals the North is willing to release them through negotiations."

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo headlined its article: "Deportation or Prolonged Detention... the Variable Lies in Sanctions at UN Security Council"

Conservative Chosun Ilbo editorialized: "No matter what type of dialogue the U.S. pursues with North Korea in the future, the U. S. should not lose sight of the fact that our ultimate goal is to denuclearize North Korea.... Furthermore, there should be no change

in the Obama Administration's position of viewing the North Korean nuclear issue and the issue of the journalists as entirely separate matters."

Conservative Dong-a Ilbo's editorial argued: "North Korea may have judged Washington's efforts to secure the release of the journalists as an intention to make concessions (to the North) and imposed such a heavy sentence in order to strengthen its bargaining position. ... U.S. President Obama said, 'We are not intending to continue a policy of rewarding (North Korea's) provocation.' The same principle should be applied not only to the nuclear test but also to inhumane behavior, such as holding civilians hostage. A humanitarian issue is not subject to negotiation."

-Lebanon Elections

Most ROK media reported on Lebanon's pro-Western coalition's victory in June 7 parliamentary elections.

Conservative Chosun Ilbo, in an article entitled "'Obama Shock' to Islam Fundamentalists," said that President Obama's remarks during his speech at Cairo University - including "This cycle of suspicion and discord must end" - are having repercussions for the Middle East and helping Lebanon's moderates win a landslide victory over the fundamentalist Shiite militant group Hezbollah in the elections. Chosun also expected this result to influence Iran's upcoming June 12 presidential election.

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Conservative Dong-a Ilbo's headline read: "U.S. Relieved, with Iran Concerned about Declining Influence."

OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

U.S. MUST BE RESOLUTE IN DEALING WITH N. KOREA
(Chosun Ilbo, June 9, 2009, page 35)

U.S. President Barack Obama said on Saturday, "North Korea's actions over the last several months have been extraordinarily provocative" adding that Washington has no intention of pursuing a policy of rewarding the communist country should it continue to behave in this way. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton agreed, saying that North Korea's actions were very provocative and warlike and that the U.S. was looking into putting the communist country back on the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism. The U.S. government is currently pushing for strong sanctions against North Korea through the United Nations Security Council. North Korea said on Monday that its court had sentenced two female American journalists to 12 years hard labor following a four-day trial. Clinton had sent a letter to North Korean officials urging them to release the two journalists, only to be given the cold shoulder by the communist state.

It remains to be seen whether the U.S. government will put North Korea back on the list of state sponsors of terrorism. However, amid the tense standoff, seeds of dialogue between the two sides may be budding. Clinton said she was considering sending a special envoy to North Korea to negotiate the release of the journalists. Clinton suggested that if a heavyweight, such as former vice president Al Gore, is sent to North Korea and the journalists are freed, the move could have a positive impact on easing sanctions against the communist country, opening the possibility of negotiations. Despite seeking sanctions against North Korea, the U.S. continues to stress its desire to resolve the nuclear standoff through dialogue.

However, no matter what type of dialogue the U.S. pursues with North Korea in the future, the U. S. should not lose sight of the fact that our ultimate goal is to denuclearize North Korea, an elusive goal over the last 16 years. Clinton on Sunday accurately predicted that an arms race could begin in Northeast Asia unless effective and meaningful measures are taken against North Korea and it gives up its nuclear ambitions. Furthermore, there should be no change in the Obama Administration's position of viewing the North Korean

nuclear issue and the issue of the journalists as entirely separate matters. The U.S. government is not considering military options against North Korea at the present time and, if it is to prod North Korea to change through economic sanctions and other forms of pressure, those sanctions must be resolute, uniform and lasting.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

RANSOM SHOULD NOT BE PAID TO NORTH KOREA FOR HOLDING CIVILIANS HOSTAGE

(Dong-a Ilbo, June 9, 2009, Page 31)

The Central Court, the highest court of North Korea, has sentenced the two detained U.S. female journalists to 12 years of reform through labor. After saying on June 4 that the trial would begin, North Korea's official news agency reported on the result of the trial yesterday, a day after U.S. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made hard-line remarks. It is a blatant threat aimed at using the detained journalists as a bargaining chip to pressure the U.S.

The two journalists were detained by the North on March 17 while reporting on North Korean refugees along the Tumen River dividing China and North Korea. The North accused them of hostile acts against the nation and illegal entry. Although they were not charged with espionage, the North sentenced them to severe

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punishment, which suggests that Pyongyang's intention is to ask for more money in return for their release. The U.S. Department of State issued a statement that "We are deeply concerned." The North did not allow U.S. representatives to attend the trial.

The Kim Jong-il regime, which launched rockets and conducted a nuclear test in defiance of the UN Security Council resolution, does not seem to take any notice of the human rights of foreign journalists. Secretary Clinton said in a June 7 interview with ABC that (she) sent the North a letter appealing for the release of the journalists and received some responses. There is a possibility that former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, chairman of Current TV, which employs the two journalists, might visit North Korea. North Korea may have judged Washington's efforts to secure the release of the journalists as an intention to make concessions (to the North) and imposed such a heavy sentence in order to strengthen its bargaining position.

North Korea's treatment of a Hyundai Asan employee, who has been detained by the North at the Kaesong Industrial Complex for 72 days, is more inhumane. Pyongyang renounced inter-Korean agreements and has not allowed the ROK any access to the employee. In addition, since May 15, it has not provided any information about him.

U.S. President Obama said, "We are not intending to continue a policy of rewarding (North Korea's) provocation." The same principle should be applied not only to the nuclear test but also to inhumane behavior, such as holding civilians hostage. A humanitarian issue is not subject to negotiation.

FEATURES

"OBAMA SHOCK" TO ISLAM FUNDAMENTALISTS

(Chosun Ilbo, June 9, 2009, Page 16; Excerpts)

By Reporter Lee Hye-woon

U.S. President Obama's speech in Cairo, Egypt, is having repercussions for fundamentalists in the Middle East. During the speech, while calling for a "new beginning" and saying, "This cycle of suspicion and discord must end," President Obama did not use the word "terror" even once. The Islamic world had strongly complained that the Bush Administration reinforced the negative image, "Islam = terror" while staging a "war on terrorism" in Iraq and Afghanistan.

....

In the June 7 parliamentary elections, Lebanon's pro-Western coalition won a landslide victory over the fundamentalist Shiite militant group Hezbollah. Ahead of a presidential election scheduled for June 12, contrary to expectations, former Prime Minister Mir Hossein Mousavi, who is attempting to improve relations with the West, is faring better than current President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who has a strong disposition toward Islamic fundamentalism.

(Ed. Note: The article quotes western media, such as AP, New York Times, Bloomberg, and International Herald Tribune, to show the effect that President Obama's speech is having on the political situation in the Middle East.)

SURVEY: 29 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS URGE LEE MYUNG-BAK ADMINISTRATION TO CHANGE ITS ONE-SIDED APPROACH TO STATE ADMINISTRATION; 22 PERCENT CALL FOR RULING GNP TO SEEK RECONCILIATION AMONG PARTY FACTIONS (Hankook Ilbo, June 9, 2009, Front page)

By Reporter Kim Gwang-deok

At the request of Hankook Ilbo, Media Research conducted an opinion survey of 1,000 adults on June 6 to 7 through telephone interviews. The poll's margin of error is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

What is the first problem that needs to be addressed by the Lee

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Myung-bak Government and the ruling GNP?

Change the one-sided approach to state administration (29.2%)

Seek reconciliation among party factions (22.0%)

Avoid appointing government officials based on regional and personal connections (13.2%)

Reshuffle the GNP leadership and the Cabinet (11.4%)

Reform the GNP's method of operation (10.9%)

What is the most urgent task facing the Lee Myung-bak Government?

(Multiple responses are possible.)

Economic growth 36.8%

Price stability 34.6%

Unemployment rate reduction 27.1%

How is President Lee Myung-bak managing state affairs?

Doing very well (4.9%)

Doing well overall (25.4%)

Doing poorly overall (36.1%)

Doing very poorly (26.9%)

The 30.3% response in favor of President Lee's performance is a considerable decrease from the response of 37.1% recorded in a February survey.

Who is most responsible for former President Roh's death? (Multiple responses)

Media (40.3%)

Former President Roh and his family (38.2%)

President Lee Myung-bak (36.6%)

Prosecution (31.8%)

Ruling Grand National Party (GNP) (23.8%)

Opposition Democratic Party (DP) (5.8%)

Is former President Roh's death related to "political revenge?"

Yes (57.1%)

No (38.3%)

Which political party do you support?

Democratic Party (29.4%)

Grand National Party (27.3%)

What direction should the ROK take in its relations with the U.S.?

(Multiple responses are possible.)

Stronger ties with the U.S. (19.1%)

Maintain the current relationship with the U.S. (48.5%)

Break away from U.S.-focused diplomacy (50.1%)

The response of 19.1% in favor of stronger ties with the U.S. is a sharp increase from the 6.3% recorded in a 2002 survey.

Are you in favor of the broadcasting reform bill that would permit conglomerates and newspaper companies to own up to 20% stake of a broadcasting company?

No (62.8%)

What is your ideological disposition?

Moderate (38.9%)

Progressive (28.0%)

Conservative (27.2%)

What do you think of reunifying the two Koreas?

The two Koreas must be reunified (10.5%)

No need for reunification (9.2%)

Seek reunification (as appropriate under the) circumstances (50.9%)

No need to hurry (27.9%)

The response of 9.2% in favor of "no need for reunification" is a sharp increase from the 4.3% recorded in a 2002 survey.

The percentage of respondents who claim to be progressive increased (as compared to the February survey.) This is because, in the wake of former President Roh's death, conservative ideology has lost momentum while progressive ideology has gained force. At the same time, respondents are taking a conservative approach toward the

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ROK's foreign policy. The number of people in the ROK who look favorably upon relations with the U.S. has increased as people take a realistic perspective regarding the need to counter North Korean threats when tensions are escalating on the Korean Peninsula due to North Korea's long-range missile launch and nuclear test.

STEPHENS